

# FUTURE NOW

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★ ★ PLAN ★ ★



**SUSANA** ★  
**MENDOZA**  
FOR **MAYOR**

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Chicago needs a mayor who is concerned about the next generation, not just the next four years. This is no time for a caretaker mayor or someone who represents the status quo. We need to prepare Chicago for the jobs of the future, not just focus on the past.

The big issues that Chicagoans face – violent crime, high property taxes, under resourced schools — those are issues I have dealt with my whole life. It's time to have a mayor who is from the neighborhood, who understands neighborhoods and puts neighborhoods first. I'm excited to work with all Chicagoans. To that end, my Future Now Plan starts with my vision to make our streets safer, improve schools in every neighborhood, create economic growth across the city, and lay out a fiscal path that moves away from taxing seniors and families who can least afford it. As the campaign unfolds, I will add to the Future Now Plan my ideas on housing, transportation, and health.

I did not invent all of these ideas from scratch on my own. I've listened to neighbors and experts from across the city to frame a future that makes Chicago work for everyone. Many ideas build on existing programs here in Chicago or borrow from plans that are working in other cities.

The next mayor still will have to tackle serious fiscal challenges without adding to the burden of already hard-pressed homeowners. Having led the state through the worst fiscal crisis in its history, I feel well qualified to lead that effort.

Read my plan and tell me what you think by visiting [www.susanamendoza.com/letmeknowwhatyouthink](http://www.susanamendoza.com/letmeknowwhatyouthink). I look forward to adding the best feedback to my Future Now Plan, so we can shape Chicago's future together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susana L. Mendoza".

# Public Safety



## PUBLIC SAFETY AND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Susana Mendoza was born in Little Village on Chicago's Southwest side to Mexican immigrants. When she was 7 years old, a gang-related murder on the block where she lived drove her parents to leave Chicago. It wasn't her choice to leave, but it was her choice to come back after she finished school. Susana vowed to return after graduating college to tackle the related issues of violence, education and economic opportunity, and she's been working to help those in the community she grew up in ever since. Susana's public safety plan aims to ensure that no family has to leave their neighborhood because they don't feel safe.

As a child from a neighborhood victimized by violence and as the sister of a police detective, Susana sees this issue from a unique perspective that no other candidate for mayor possesses. To address today's levels of violence and build trust between police and the communities they serve, Susana has a comprehensive strategy that tackles the systemic issues of economic disinvestment, institutional racism, criminal justice inequality, and segregation. Too often, we address these problems when it is too late rather than proactively solving the problem.

Susana's plan takes a holistic view of the crime problem—not just hiring more police, but attacking the root causes of violence by investing in at-risk youth and returning citizens. Specifically, she will take the following steps:

### **Revamp training for police officers.**

For too long, police training has been viewed as something we only do to prepare new recruits. We need to completely revamp the CPD's training programs – whether it is pre-service at the academy, in-service with veteran personnel on a regular basis, and in the field where commanders should use everyday examples on the street to reinforce these trainings learned or relearned in the classroom. We owe it to every mother who watches her child walk out the door, and we owe it to every spouse of every officer who walks

out the door in the morning, to do everything we can to make sure they all come home safely – and that starts with better police training.

### **Prioritize de-escalation in training.**

Susana is strongly committed to training and equipping our officers with the tools and the lessons to de-escalate first, rather than engage first. Our police personnel need better training in de-escalating domestic violence situations, ones that can be as potentially deadly to the officer as they are to the victim.

### **Implement crisis intervention training.**

Our officers need better training to recognize mental health issues when they arrive on the scene, especially recognizing when someone is both a real danger to those around them and a danger to themselves. We should ensure that all sworn officers receive Crisis Intervention Training in the academy so that they can be certified on day one, not 18 months into their service.

### **Create a new training facility as a community hub.**

It is impossible to train, re-train and constantly update the trainings of 12,000 police personnel with the out-of-date, out-of-scale training infrastructure we have in Chicago today. That's why Susana supports building a new police and fire training academy. As part of the construction of the academy, Susana believes that it should be turned into a true community hub with space for local nonprofits and social service organizations and adjacent parks that are safe places for children to play.

### **Invest in smart community policing.**

We should all admire any man or woman who puts on a uniform and is willing to lay down their life to protect the lives of people they have never even met. Whether they are marines or soldiers or sailors or closer to home serving as our police officers, firefighters and EMTs, we should honor those who put their lives on the line every day. But while those who wear a police uniform are everyday heroes, they ought not have the warrior mentality of those heroes who serve in our armed forces. When it comes to tackling crime here in Chicago, there should be no "us and them." There should only be "we."

Despite the fact that they carry a firearm and wear body armor similar to what our soldiers wear, we need to instill in our police officers a completely different ethos – one the Obama Justice Department report calls a "guardian mindset." Restoring trust between people in our neighborhoods and the men and women who serve them is absolutely fundamental to a comprehensive effort to reduce crime. Trust is at the core of effective policing, and Susana will support community policing strategies and reforms that build confidence in law enforcement.



## **Expand community policing.**

Over the past few decades, investment in community policing has declined sharply. In 2016, Chicago's community policing program, CAPS, had less than a third of the budget it had in 1999. Susana will make needed investments to increase the number of officers in the CAPS program, build community awareness and relations into officer training, and expand the use of community stakeholder meetings to bring more residents to the table.

## **Bring communities into community policing training.**

Susana will work with faith and community leaders to incorporate diverse communities into the training process, so officers can better interact with the neighborhoods they serve.

## **Build upon proven policing strategies.**

In recent years, CPD has implemented new tactics and strategies that are showing positive results. These new tools range from establishing district-level intelligence centers and leveraging technology to reduce response times, to equipping officers with body cameras and increasing the

number of tasers available to officers. Susana will make the investments necessary to expand the use of these critical tools throughout the city.

## **Invest to expand street-level intervention.**

Susana will support the return of street violence interrupters who identify and resolve conflicts before they escalate in targeted neighborhoods under stronger management and oversight by the city. Previous efforts to scale up violence interruption work have not succeeded in part because of a lack of oversight and accountability for nonprofit partners. In Los Angeles, a city with a similar gang proliferation challenge as Chicago, the city's violence interruption strategy is coordinated from the mayor's office and better integrated with the police department. Susana will invest in violence interruption nonprofits while bringing Chicago's oversight and accountability standards closer in line with other major cities to ensure the success of scaled up programs.

## **Reform governance and policing practices to rebuild trust.**

Susana's unique perspective on policing is grounded in her personal experience: she grew up in a neighborhood with rampant violence and experiences a similar stress every day with family on the police force. Susana will work to implement policies that increase trust and cooperation between law enforcement and the communities they serve. In Chicago, police solve less than one in six homicides, well below the national average of 60%. This failure to solve homicides and shootings is driven in part by a lack of trust in the Chicago Police Department. Susana will work to rebuild trust in the police through a series of balanced reforms.

### **Implement the consent decree in good faith.**

Through a consent decree negotiated with the Illinois Attorney General, an independent monitor will have oversight over police reform. These reforms will cover a range of subjects from community policing, to use of force, to conflict de-escalation. Susana's administration will work hand-in-hand with the independent monitor and Illinois Attorney General to ensure that the required reforms are fully funded and implemented.

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### **Support a balanced approach to governance reform.**

Susana supports a balanced set of reforms to increase the role of civilians in CPD oversight. Susana will listen to the concerns of the community, including groups like the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA), while ensuring that the mayor ultimately has strong accountability and responsibility for the actions of the city's police department. Susana will negotiate a set of governance reforms that balances the need for a greater community role in police decision making with the need to ensure law enforcement experts are able to develop strategies to reduce crime.



## Expand initiatives to coordinate violence reduction across departments.

Over the course of the past decade, the mayor has relied upon a handful of staff to coordinate the efforts of the multiple departments that affect public safety. Susana will increase the amount of staff resources dedicated to help manage the many contributors to public safety, from law enforcement, to community engagement, to violence prevention. By creating a new Office of Violence Reduction, with a robust team supported by staff members from every affected department, Susana will ensure that the city's violence reduction efforts are being executed in a coordinated manner, rather than stuck in bureaucratic silos.

## Develop an early warning system for problem officers.

An external analysis of CPD complaint data dating back to 1988 found that small networks of police officers are responsible for a disproportionate number of complaints. This point was confirmed in the consent decree negotiated with the Illinois Attorney General,

who mandated the creation of such a warning system. For many of these problem officers, their conduct worsened over time as early incidents occurred without discipline. Susana will make it a priority to develop an early intervention system to identify at-risk officers before they graduate from the academy, and to intervene with training or discipline for serious offenders who are already in uniform.



### **Improve the case closure rate.**

In 2017, Chicago saw an abysmally low 17.1% closure rate on homicides. That fell even further in the first half of 2018 to 15.4%. With every case that goes unsolved, trust is lost amongst Chicagoans and the cycle of violence continues. Susana will tackle this problem with the following initiatives:

#### **Increase the number of detectives and empower them to solve more crimes.**

Susana will prioritize hiring detectives to help close cases more quickly, prevent retaliatory violence, and get criminals off the street before they are able to strike again. Her first budget will call for at least 100 new detectives to bring the total to 1200 officers, and additional investment in the training and technology they need to be successful. These detectives will pay for themselves by more quickly closing cases and bringing down the Department's staggering overtime costs.

#### **Expand training for detectives.**

Susana recognizes that hiring more detectives is not enough to combat the low clearance rates, so she will direct the Superintendent to improve and update training that provides detectives with

the latest resources to build strong cases as well as the skills to improve interaction with residents. Additionally, she supports implementing regular refresher training for detectives that covers any legal updates, new technologies, and new policies and procedures.



**Mendoza: More  
neighborhood schools,  
more social services,  
more police detectives**

**Crack down on illegal guns.**

One of the core drivers of Chicago's higher homicide rates is the sheer volume of illegal guns that enter the city. Susana has a strong track record of fighting against the influx of illegal guns. In addition to voting in favor of a 30-day waiting period for handguns, Susana sponsored legislation allowing prosecution of illegal gun sellers for crimes committed with that gun for one year after sale. She also supported legislation allowing for revocation of a firearm owner's identity card for a parent or guardian who is unable to prevent their child from gaining access to firearms. According to a gun trace report prepared by CPD, in 2016 Chicago police recovered 6 times as many guns per capita compared to New York City, and 1.5 times as many guns per capita as Los Angeles. In recent years, two out of five guns recovered were originally purchased from Chicago-area federally-licensed gun dealers. Susana will support efforts to pass common sense gun control and get illegal guns off the streets.

**Pass gun dealer regulation.**

Susana will work with Governor Pritzker and Springfield legislators to pass common sense regulations to crack down on the flood of guns entering Chicago from suburban gun dealers. Over the past two years, legislators have worked to develop a

balanced approach that would require gun dealers to obtain a state license or certification and put preventative measures in place, including installing security systems, training employees on straw purchasers and other risks, and developing a safe storage plan, among other changes. Due to Governor Rauner's opposition, advocates were unable to pass this legislation in the General Assembly. With change coming in Springfield, we have an opportunity to help push these reforms forward.

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## **Address root causes of violence by supporting a public health approach to violence prevention.**

Data show that our neighborhoods suffering from the highest crime rates are also struggling with other challenges such as high unemployment rates, lower life expectancies, and other public health issues. Susana knows that this strong link means the city must take a public health approach to addressing the violence in our communities.

### **Pilot mental health co-responders.**

To strengthen CPD's crisis intervention and conflict de-escalation strategy, Susana will direct the Superintendent, Department of Public Health, and Office of Emergency Management to develop a pilot to deploy mental health specialists with police officers to respond to incident calls. Under this approach, which has been adopted in a handful of other cities, mental health providers would respond to 911 calls with CPD officers and work to link individuals in need of treatment to services.

## **Support successful school-based prevention programs.**

Susana's 50NEW (Neighborhood Education Works) Initiative will work to find and expand proven solutions that cross the boundaries of violence prevention, educational achievement, and economic opportunity. Over the course of the past decade, several innovative nonprofits have developed and expanded a number of proven violence prevention programs that serve at-risk CPS students. Programs like Becoming a Man, Working on Womanhood, and Choose to Change currently serve thousands of CPS students and have successfully reduced the likelihood of a student becoming the victim or perpetrator of a violent crime. Today, the city and its sister agencies invest more than \$11 million in these programs. Susana will maintain funding for these initiatives and look for opportunities to expand them, including by offering them space in community schools as part of the 50NEW Initiative, which is detailed later in this plan.

### **Expand programs that target at-risk residents with jobs and services.**

There are a number of programs that provide entry-level jobs in addition to cognitive behavioral therapy and social services to individuals at heightened risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence. From Heartland Alliance's Rapid Employment and Development Initiative (READI) to the Emerson Collective's Chicago Creating Real Economic Destiny (CRED) program, Susana will build on these private and philanthropic efforts to identify sustainable funding for programs that work.

### **Invest in strong re-entry programs.**

To take on violence in a meaningful way, the city must create a comprehensive plan with its county partners to address recidivism. Not only is repeated incarceration costly, failure to support rehabilitative programs in prisons can result in incarcerated individuals becoming more violent upon reentry into society. Building on models like the ACE program from the Safer Foundation, Susana will support programs that include prison education and

workforce development to give formerly incarcerated individuals a pathway to stability and self-sufficiency. In addition to reducing violence, strong re-entry programs would have a significant economic impact. A recent report by the Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council (SPAC) found that with a 10% reduction in recidivism, Illinois would see \$301 million in taxpayer savings and \$150 million in economic activity.

### **Promote strong mentoring programs.**

Susana knows the powerful impact mentors can have in transforming lives because of her own experience at places like the Boys and Girls Club. In order to support an approach that doesn't only treat the symptoms of violence, Susana knows there has to be investment in programs that give children in every neighborhood an opportunity to find their own pathways to success. As mayor, she intends to build upon the successes of programs like BAM and WOW, in addition to giving mentorship programs space in underutilized schools as part of her 50NEW Initiative.





# Education



## A STRONG PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ALL CHICAGOANS

As the parent of a 6-year-old attending a neighborhood public school, Susana is deeply and personally invested in the future of Chicago public education. Susana wants parents, grandparents, and teachers to have more of a voice in our schools, and she wants the next mayor to share accountability for improving schools. For too long, education policy has been something done *to* our communities and done *to* our families, not worked out *with* our parents and *with* our teachers. As mayor, Susana will change that.

Access to a quality education is the bedrock of a strong city. Our most pressing problems—from high crime rates to lack of jobs and economic development—can be addressed by ensuring strong neighborhood schools that create opportunity hubs in every community. We should be proud of the success achieved by CPS teachers and administrators, with record-high graduation rates, higher test scores, the largest IB network in the nation, and stabilized finances. But our real work has just begun. We must ensure every child in every community receives the same high-quality education at their neighborhood school.

**Susana's education plan is built around a simple goal: to close the achievement gap.** Susana believes that we can cut the achievement gap by half in the next eight years and set Chicago Public Schools on a path to eliminate it entirely. **While some simply look to the next 50 schools that can be closed, Susana's 50NEW (Neighborhood Education Works) Initiative is focused on doubling down on the neediest schools by expanding wrap-around services, increasing the number of social workers, and investing in school-based supports in high-poverty schools.** Where buildings are underutilized, she will work to put unused space to use by offering subsidized rent to local nonprofits so that our schools become true community hubs.

## **Create a more equitable district.**

Too often when it comes to education, your zip code determines your destiny. Even though Chicago students outperform their peers with similar demographics outside of the city, there is more work to do. A University of Chicago study found persistent achievement gaps between Black and Latinx students and their white and Asian peers when it came to high school graduation rates, college enrollment, standardized test scores and graduating GPAs. It also found that male CPS students often lagged behind their female peers. That's unacceptable to Susana. Susana will make equity a priority to ensure that we as a city are investing more in educating children in underserved neighborhoods.

### **Implement the 50NEW Initiative.**

Rather than close schools with low enrollment, Susana wants to reinvest in 50 under-enrolled, underutilized schools and turn them into true community hubs using the community school model. Using the additional equity funding coming from Springfield, these schools would partner with day care centers, family service providers, job training organizations, and other social service providers to provide wrap-around services to

neighborhood kids and their families—everything from nutrition to life skills training to after-school academic help and counseling. By providing these wrap-around services, we can ensure that teachers can teach and principals can lead.

### **1. Additional social workers and college counselors in the schools that need them.**

Earlier this summer, CPS invested \$26 million to hire 160 social workers and 94 special education case managers to work inside district schools. The unique needs of students in CPS' neediest schools require additional investment to provide the supports these students need to thrive. These wrap-around services are critical to helping close the achievement gap and can be funded by an equitable distribution of CPS resources. Susana will work with stakeholders to set a goal for expanding these supports and commit to providing the necessary resources.

**2. Nutrition that students need.**

We all know that children can't learn when they're hungry or worried about being hungry again soon. That's why Susana helped create the Illinois School Breakfast program when she was a state representative and it's why she wants to help children get the nutrition they need as part of her 50NEW Initiative. While parents and local community members are taking advantage of job training and other services offered by the community schools, students will have the opportunity to eat supper after school. This will give students the energy and focus they need to get their homework done and prepare themselves for their next day at school.

**3. After-school educational support.**

Every student should understand that if they need additional help, they can ask for it. That's why the 50NEW Initiative provides

for after-school staff who can help with homework or provide additional support to those students with difficulty in reading or math. These programs will also give parents peace of mind that their children are in a positive educational environment after school, and if they should fall behind in their schoolwork, they have every opportunity to catch back up.

**CHICAGO SUN★TIMES**

**Mendoza vows to transform 50 under-utilized CPS schools into community anchors**

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#### 4. Job training and services.

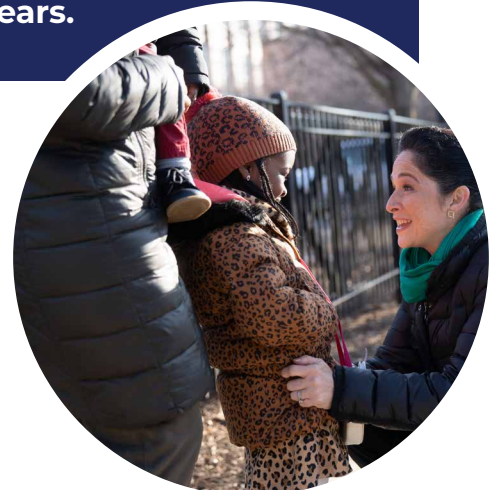
For parents who are in search of employment, juggling the job search with the responsibility of finding child care and ensuring your children are getting the academic help they need can be an insurmountable challenge. The 50NEW Initiative means you can find all of that under one roof. By offering space for skills training and employment service organizations in underutilized schools, parents will be able to unlock their own economic potential at the same time their children are catching up on homework and eating supper.

#### Develop a fairer funding formula.

Within the CPS school district, there exist real disparities between schools in wealthier neighborhoods and those in neighborhoods suffering from high rates of unemployment and crime. CPS should develop a new equity formula to distribute its share of the new funding that CPS will be receiving in the coming years

under the new education funding formula. Susana was a strong supporter of the reform, traveling the state with State Sen. Andy Manar to advocate for changes that gave Chicago schools more equitable funding. The new Springfield formula established a funding target for each school district based on student population and the cost of nearly three dozen practices proven by research to benefit students. Under this bill, the State of Illinois is called upon to invest an additional \$350 million in school funding every year over the next decade, with CPS receiving nearly 20%.

**CPS should develop a new equity formula to distribute its share of the new funding that CPS will be receiving in the coming years.**



## **Assign high quality teachers to under resourced schools.**

Every student deserves a teacher who is invested in their growth and believes in their abilities. As a state representative, Susana helped lead the passage of a bill that helped save over 3,000 teaching jobs. Susana wants to invest in high quality teachers because she knows that there's no way to close the achievement gap without them. Through the Opportunity Schools initiative, CPS has recruited strong teachers for 50 schools in low-income neighborhoods and paired them with intensive teacher retention and leadership supports. Susana will expand and improve this initiative to ensure that the district has a pipeline of quality teachers ready to join schools that need them.

## **Strong investment in special education.**

When Susana got to the comptroller's office, quarterly categorical payments that schools relied on to fund special education programs and transportation for students with special needs were running nearly a year behind. Susana tackled that problem head-on by re-prioritizing payments to

ensure that the state's most vulnerable populations were being served first. As a result, Chicago Public Schools received \$119 million in special education funding it had been expecting to receive months earlier. As mayor, Susana will continue to ensure that schools have the resources they need to give every student a quality education, no matter their abilities.

## **Expand Early Childhood Education.**

Studies show that the educational benefits of pre-K education are significant. A recent analysis by CPS found that students who attended pre-K achieved higher GPAs, better attendance, and higher standardized test scores by the time they reached the 3rd grade than their peers who never enrolled in pre-K. From the impact early education has on early brain development to the support it offers to the schedules of working parents, there is a growing consensus that universal early education is a fundamental building block of a fair economy. By leveraging TIF funds that can be used for child care and dedicating a portion of the equity funding coming from Springfield to this initiative, Susana will help ensure that every Chicago Public Schools student starts kindergarten off on the right foot.

## Ensuring universal full-day pre-K.

As the parent of a Chicago Public Schools kindergarten student, Susana knows how important it is to have quality pre-K programs that get children ready for kindergarten. With full-day pre-K, parents can have the peace of mind that their children are in healthy learning environments and spend less time arranging child care and transportation for their kids. Susana will continue the expansion of universal pre-K programming and advocate for a dedicated source of funds from Springfield to support the initiative. Once fully implemented, this program will provide free, quality full-day pre-K to more than 24,000 four-year-olds.

## Protect and improve the quality of pre-K programs.

Susana will ensure that principals are evaluated fairly and transparently on the quality of their pre-K programs and the impact these programs have on kindergarten readiness. Susana will also ensure that pre-K programs are using proven evidence-based programs to tackle racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps.

## Enhance Accountability and Credibility.

The credibility of the Chicago Public Schools has taken a hit in recent years following a succession of CEOs brought down by ethics scandals. Susana will take decisive steps to restore faith in our school district.

## An accountable school board.

Susana supports an elected school board. This type of local representation gives community members an additional and highly valuable avenue for engaging in the decision-making process. Susana also believes that, as the city's chief executive, abdicating responsibility for our city's most valuable asset — its young people — would be a failure of leadership. That's why she supports an elected school board that also has mayor-appointed members. This ensures mayors are invested in the success of neighborhood schools, while guaranteeing community members avenues for engagement in public education. Similar models are followed in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore County, Maryland, and adopting the approach in Chicago would make the Board more accountable to residents while ensuring that mayors continue to have skin in the game.



## **Reexamine previous privatization decisions.**

Recent privatization decisions involving school janitors, building engineers, and food service have been met with mixed results. Susana will undertake a thorough and independent review of all CPS privatization decisions to determine whether management improvements or outright reversals are needed to ensure quality of services for our children.

## **Hold charter schools accountable.**

Susana believes that we need to first prioritize our neighborhood schools and will make sure that the charter schools that exist are held to the same high standards as neighborhood schools. She will also stand by teachers' right to organize and collectively bargain in charter schools, just as she stood in solidarity with teachers at Acero charter schools.

## **Focus on Quality.**

Students must know that no matter what part of Chicago they're from, they have an equal shot at a quality education. Preparing a student population as diverse as Chicago's for a lifetime of success requires a broad range of approaches. While methodologies may vary based on

student need and interest, there must be one constant across the district: quality. Susana will ensure that there is a focus on quality programming across the district.

## **Expand access to proven models.**

Susana will expand the district's International Baccalaureate, STEM, and Military high school programs because, with graduation rates above 80% and freshmen on-track rates above 90%, we know these programs work. Susana will work to ensure that every child in every neighborhood has access to these opportunities.

## **Protect the full school day.**

After transitioning to the longer school day in 2012, a student entering kindergarten now receives nearly 2.5 additional years of instruction by the time they graduate high school. This extra time in a classroom with our world class teachers is a key driver of student growth. Susana will maintain a full school day to ensure that the district maintains the momentum of academic improvement of the past few years.

## Provide autonomy for school principals.

Principal autonomy is one of the distinguishing characteristics of CPS, where principals have more discretion over their budgets and their schools than their suburban peers. According to the Chicago Public Education Fund, the leadership of a principal accounts for 25% of the total school influence on a child's academic performance. Over the past decade, CPS has increased principal autonomy over budget, curriculum and schedules, while investing in the retention and pipeline for quality principals through a range of initiatives. Susana knows that to create true community schools, principals need to be given the tools they need to gain the confidence of parents and students.

## Expand access to sports and arts.

Access to a quality education doesn't just mean academic excellence; it also means access to robust sports and arts programs. These programs enrich students' academic lives, but too often, they're the first ones on the chopping block. Children in every neighborhood should be able to unlock their own potential through sports and arts programs, and Susana will work to protect those programs in neighborhood schools. In addition to working within the school system, Susana will work with the Chicago Park District, local professional sports teams, local artists and local musicians to raise additional private funds and ensure that access to these programs is available in all parts of the city.

**According to the Chicago Public Education Fund, the leadership of a principal accounts for 25% of the total school influence on a child's academic performance.**



**Create a College and Career Culture.**

A high school diploma is no longer sufficient in today's economy. Preparing Chicago's students for the 21st century economy will require a cultural shift towards a universal expectation that education must continue beyond the 12th grade. As a first-generation college student, Susana knows the impact that access to postsecondary education can have on the trajectory of a student's life. That's why Susana will pursue initiatives to increase readiness and access to postsecondary education. These priorities include:

**Increasing access to early college and career credit.**

Research clearly shows that high school students who earn postsecondary credit are significantly more likely to graduate and move on to college. CPS has experienced tremendous growth in this area: nearly 47% of 2018 CPS graduates earned college or career credit, up from 31% in 2014. Susana will set an ambitious goal to ensure that 65% of CPS graduates earn college or career credit by 2025 and make the necessary investments to grow the number of International Baccalaureate schools, expand dual credit and dual enrollment partnerships with

the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), increase the number of vocational programs, and expand access to Advanced Placement courses and exams.

**Expand vocational programs in partnership with labor.**

While a college degree is increasingly critical to securing a job with a middle-class salary, there are still well-paying jobs that require vocational training short of a four-year diploma. Susana will partner with trade unions to expand vocational training opportunities in CPS high schools and expand the number of students exposed to careers in the trades. Susana will also build on the success of the Reinvention program at City Colleges of Chicago. The program, which has been recognized by the World Bank as a model workforce development strategy, has established partnerships with dozens of corporations, nonprofits, and other large employers to co-design curricula, offer internships to students, and offer jobs to graduates. As mayor, Susana will seek opportunities for students by focusing on partnerships with employers in fast-growing industries.

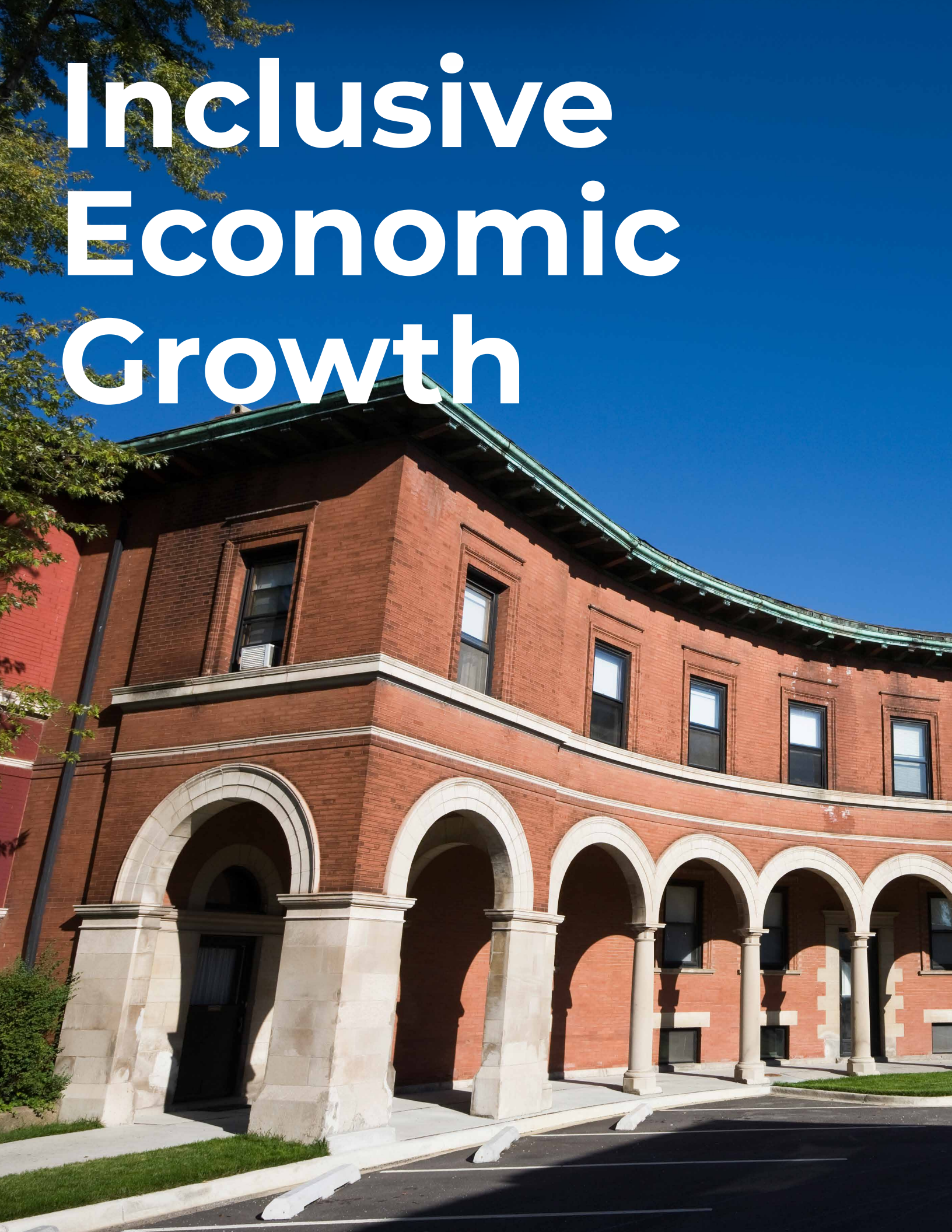
## Support Dreamers and expand the Star Scholarship.

Now entering its fourth year, the Chicago Star Scholarship offers free associate degrees to students who graduate from CPS with a B average or better. Significantly, the program is open to Dreamers, who have limited options for obtaining financial aid for postsecondary education. To date, more than 4,500 CPS graduates, representing more than 75 zip codes and more than 200 high schools citywide, have participated in the program. Nearly two dozen four-year universities have partnered with City Colleges of Chicago to provide full and partial tuition scholarships for Star Scholars seeking four-year degrees. Star Scholars have earned more than \$3 million in scholarship offers from City Colleges' four-year college and university transfer partners. This program has been a remarkable success, helping drive an increase in enrollment and graduation rates at CCC. Susana will work to strengthen and expand the program through additional partnerships and innovative enhancements such as establishing an endowment to support future Star Scholars.

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# Inclusive Economic Growth

## INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Decades of discriminatory policies on the federal, state, and local level have created communities suffering from disenfranchisement and disinvestment with little opportunity to build long-term wealth and prosperity. According to a study from the University of Illinois at Chicago, inequality in Chicago has been growing over the past 40 years, and the number of concentrated areas where wealthy individuals live, especially on the North Side of the city, has quadrupled. Meanwhile, we continue to see the expansion of areas that are low-income with high poverty rates on the South and West sides of the city. For the first time, Chicago is on firmer financial footing to tackle these issues. To ensure every neighborhood in the city thrives, especially those with high rates of poverty, Susana will prioritize strategies that ensure investments and job creation focus on these communities by leveraging the rapid downtown growth to bring more resources and investment to neighborhoods suffering from low opportunity.

### **Bring more investment to neighborhoods.**

Chicago's greater downtown is one of the fastest growing urban cores in the United States. However, Susana recognizes that this prosperity has not been distributed equally throughout the city and will work to leverage our current growth to bring more investment to neighborhoods while connecting residents to jobs created downtown.

### **Invest fees collected downtown in our neighborhoods.**

The Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) invests funds, paid by developers to obtain the rights to building denser projects in the downtown area, to support job creation in neighborhoods on the South and West sides of Chicago. Since its launch in

2017, the NOF has invested \$11 million to support 90 businesses and drive \$55 million in new neighborhood investment. This program can be expanded by tapping some of the nearly \$250 million in downtown TIF districts that are subject to the freeze put in place by Mayor Rahm Emanuel in 2014. These funds cannot be used elsewhere in the city due to an Illinois law that restricts TIF use to projects located within or adjacent to the districts where funds were generated. Susana will put her Springfield legislative expertise to work and fight to change this law so these funds can be used in the neighborhoods most in need of investment.



## **Tie hiring requirements to large zoning changes.**

In 2017, the city issued a policy that encourages planned developments to hire minority- and women-owned contractors. Susana will expand upon this policy by making it the law and widening its scope to include requirements to hire returning citizens or participants in violence reduction initiatives like READI.

## **Increase access to capital for small businesses.**

Over the course of this decade, the city of Chicago made good progress on expanding capital sources for neighborhood businesses via initiatives like microlending and the SimpleGrowth platform for connecting businesses to lending programs. Susana will double down on this priority by fully implementing the City Treasurer's \$100 million Catalyst Fund and identifying other pools of capital for neighborhood businesses.

## **Create economic development teams in targeted neighborhoods.**

To provide focused and sustained economic development planning for neighborhoods in need of

more support, Susana will work with World Business Chicago and private partners to establish and support existing neighborhood organizations that will coordinate development strategies. This work will include helping guide the use of citywide programs like the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, Retail Thrive Zones, and other initiatives.

## **Fully implement manufacturing growth zones.**

In 2017, the city of Chicago launched the manufacturing growth zone to streamline the process for new manufacturing businesses to acquire land, access workforce development programs, and take advantage of incentive programs. There is still work to be done to fully implement the program, most notably in providing additional capacity building, equipment grants, management training, and coaches to help struggling manufacturers compete in the new economy. Susana will see this plan through fruition to ensure Chicago maintains a competitive manufacturing base.

## Expand planned manufacturing district reforms.

Over the course of the last few years, the city's planning department has worked with affected aldermen, businesses, and residents on rezoning the North Branch planned manufacturing district to allow residential and commercial uses. Due to changes in the surrounding neighborhoods, manufacturing is no longer the highest and best use of the land in this district, but the current zoning places strict limits on other types of economic activity. As part of this effort, which would unlock hundreds of millions in value for the landowners, the city would include a fee structure to support infrastructure investments in the district and to invest in manufacturing districts elsewhere in Chicago. Susana will expand this to other manufacturing districts that are in need of a new vision with an eye towards capturing some of the unlocked value for investment in job creation and infrastructure.

## Leverage new federal opportunity zone tax credits.

The 2017 federal tax bill created a new tax credit that allows investors to partially shield capital gains from taxation, if they are reinvested into projects located in targeted low-income communities. Chicago's planning department identified 133 census tracts for inclusion in the program. Susana will develop a program - linked to the city's other initiatives from its retail thrive zones to the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund and beyond - to take advantage of this tax credit.

**The NOF has invested \$11 million to support 90 businesses and drive \$55 million in new neighborhood investment.**

## **Invest in Chicago's young people and set them up for economic success.**

According to a report by the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago has a chronic and concentrated problem of youth joblessness. Stunningly, for Chicagoans aged 20 to 24, employment conditions were worse in 2015 than in 1960. They've also found that "recovery after the Great Recession has been slow or non-existent for many groups."

### **Promote summer job programs.**

Susana's 50NEW Initiative will not only support students during the school year but will also take advantage of school spaces during the summers. For high school students, these community hubs can serve as job training centers to both give them the skills they need to find jobs and connect them to available work opportunities.

## **Train for the jobs of tomorrow.**

By some estimates, 65% of children entering elementary school now will be employed in a job that doesn't exist yet. Susana will help to prepare our young people for a changing world by focusing on training them in expanding industries like green manufacturing and data security.

## **Create a fair student lending fund accountable to residents.**

Over the past decade, we have learned how banks can design products like mortgages and student loans to favor profits over people and set working families back for decades, if not their entire lives. Today, more than 15% of the homes in the Chicago metro area remain on underwater mortgages while the average Illinois college graduate enters the workforce with nearly \$30,000 in student loan debt. Susana will take an important step in expanding access to fair lending practices by creating a fair lending fund capitalized by the city's own deposits. In exchange for relief from exorbitant interest rates on their student loans, Chicago residents will be able to access subsidized student loan refinancing and get relief from exorbitant interest rates. By putting taxpayer money to work for the betterment of the city, Chicago will also gain a major competitive advantage in attracting and retaining young talent that is critical to maintaining a vibrant city.

### **Strengthen our working families.**

After decades of assaults on fundamental workers' rights, workers have been losing their leverage in fighting for fairer wages and good benefits. Moreover, even as national and state unemployment rates continue to drop, worker wages have stagnated. Coupled with the rising cost of housing, student loans, and other basic costs of living, this means that middle- and low-income households are increasingly squeezed and are struggling to keep up. Our state and local governments have a role to play in leveling the playing field for workers by passing important protections into law and developing initiatives that boost worker incomes.

#### **Fully implement a city Office of Labor Standards.**

In 2011, the city of Chicago passed new penalties for wage theft, raised the minimum wage, required paid sick leave for all workers, and made it easier for airport ground workers to unionize. These protections have been enforced by a handful of attorneys in the city's Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection. In fall 2018, the City Council passed an ordinance establishing a dedicated Office of Labor Standards focused on enforcing these

protections. Susana will ensure that this office is fully up and running by the beginning of 2020.

#### **Support a \$15 minimum wage.**

The city of Chicago boosted the incomes of more than 400,000 workers when it passed an ordinance establishing a \$13 minimum wage by 2019. Susana believes this was an important first step, but we must do more. She will advocate for a statewide minimum wage increase to ensure that Chicago does not remain an island while also advocating to increase the city's minimum wage to \$15 in the years to come.

#### **Expand free tax prep services for EITC earners.**

The city of Chicago's free tax preparation service serves more than 20,000 taxpayers each year, helping them earn millions in EITC refunds. Susana will continue to expand the program and support linking services to more places to reach working families, including places of employment, public libraries, and other targeted locations.

**Expand the earned income tax credit.**

Federal and state earned income tax credit programs have been some of the most successful anti-poverty programs in the United States. In 2016, the EITC lifted about 5.8 million people out of poverty, including about 3 million children. However, big cities like Chicago have higher costs of living than smaller municipalities, which reduces the impact of EITC compared to other parts of the state. Other cities like New York City already offer residents a fully refundable earned income tax credit, matching 5% of the federal EITC. Susana will explore strategies to implement a new Chicago EITC to supplement paychecks for working families. Susana will also work with leaders in Springfield to expand the EITC at the state level.

**Reform fees and fines that hit low-income residents the hardest.**

The daily fees and fines imposed by the city disproportionately hit low-income residents and communities of color. According to a recent ProPublica investigation, the number of Chapter 13 bankruptcies that include city ticket debt grew from 1,000 in 2007 to more than 10,000 in 2017. This debt hits

African American neighborhoods the hardest. As mayor, Susana will launch a top to bottom review of city fines and penalties and make reforms to reduce penalties, reduce the rate at which penalties escalate, allow for amnesties where appropriate, and limit instances where license suspension is used in these cases. Susana will also explore ways to use technology to build in leniency where it makes sense, so that Chicagoans can be warned about potential violations and won't see continuous repeat tickets for the same violation, forcing some residents into bankruptcy.

**In 2016, the EITC lifted about 5.8 million people out of poverty, including about 3 million children. However, big cities like Chicago have higher costs of living than smaller municipalities, which reduces the impact of EITC compared to other parts of the state.**

### **Move towards universal child care.**

As a hard-working mom with a six-year-old son, Susana knows how hard it is for parents in Chicago to find a way to pick up their children at 3:15 pm. She also knows working families across the income spectrum face this same struggle to find affordable, quality child care. Susana will focus on meeting this need and develop tools to support the expansion of child care options throughout Chicago. These initiatives will include:

#### **Use TIF to support child care expansion.**

Illinois state law allows for TIF funds to be used to support child care for families in need, but the city has no structured program to take advantage of this authority. Susana will task the City's Department of Family and Support Services to come up with a plan to build out child care programs for families that most need it.

#### **Create development incentives to bring new options to child care deserts.**

In addition to utilizing TIF to expand child care options, Susana will direct the city's planning department to develop a set of incentives to reduce start up costs for new child care centers in areas of need. These incentives can include expedited permits and

inspections, reduced cost sale or leasing of public land and buildings, and reduced city fees.

**As a hard-working mom with a six-year-old son, Susana knows how hard it is for parents in Chicago to find a way to pick up their children at 3:15 pm. She also knows working families across the income spectrum face this same struggle to find affordable, quality child care.**





# Progressive Revenue



## FIXING CITY FINANCES WHILE PROTECTING WORKING FAMILIES

As State Comptroller, Susana led the state through the worst fiscal crisis in its history, helped to calm the markets and prioritized funding for the people that needed it the most. As the next mayor, she will draw on those experiences to lead Chicago forward. Unfunded pension obligations, structural deficits and inadequate education funding will require the next mayor to exercise discipline while raising hundreds of millions of dollars in new sources of revenue from a tax-strapped population. Susana will work to put our city's pension funds on a sounder footing—ensuring that the city lives up to its promise to hundreds of thousands of first responders, teachers, and city employees—without balancing the budget on the backs of working class families.

There is no magic solution. A comprehensive and fair fiscal strategy will require the next mayor to use multiple tools—from cutting expenses, to finding efficiencies, to fighting for Chicago's fair share in Springfield. Susana's plan is built on her experience at the city and state level, her understanding of the stresses faced by families in Chicago's neighborhoods, and her record of lowering costs before asking taxpayers to pay more. This unique combination of discipline, relationships, and neighborhood values will guide all fiscal decisions while ensuring Chicago remains a competitive business environment.

### **Progressive revenue for stabilizing pensions and expanding educational opportunities.**

Illinois's combination of a flat income tax, high sales taxes, and heavy local government reliance on property taxes gives it one of the most regressive tax systems in the country. According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, Illinois has the fifth most regressive taxation in the United States. This unfortunate fact is a driver of population loss and acts as a barrier to opportunity. While pension liabilities have been cut by nearly 20% over the last eight years, annual contributions are expected to grow by \$864 million over three years

starting in 2020, including a \$300 million increase in 2020.

At the same time, Illinois ranks 49th in the country in state funding of education and 50th in funding the neediest school districts. After Susana's tireless advocacy, a new education funding reform bill passed in Springfield in late 2017, calling for more than \$3 billion in additional funding for public schools over the next decade with the new formula distributing those dollars to low-income school districts, including nearly one-fifth benefiting Chicago Public Schools.



Susana supports innovative and responsible changes to our revenue sources that will help hold the line for middle-class and working families as we address pension and education funding needs. To accomplish this goal, she will fight for the following solutions:

### **Support a progressive income tax.**

Susana will work with Governor J.B. Pritzker to amend the state constitution to allow the state to establish a progressive income tax that raises tax rates for high-income residents without further burdening middle- and low-income families. Such a change can help the state more fairly increase revenue to address its pension challenges. She will also fight to ensure that any change in the income tax formula ensures local governments get their fair share and are not held hostage to cuts when the state tries to shore up its own finances.

### **Legalize marijuana.**

A responsible law, passed in consultation with law enforcement, to legalize cannabis use for recreational purposes can be a critical revenue stream to help address funding for social services and pensions.

Moreover, legalization would help diminish the black market for marijuana and the crime and violence that goes along with it, cut down on unjust incarceration, and allow police to focus their efforts on more important types of crime. A [2018 study](#) by Washington State University scholars found that states that had legalized recreational marijuana experienced improvements in clearance rates for violence and property crimes. Susana will work with the Governor and State Legislature to pass responsible legislation based on best practices in other states and countries, and fight to guarantee participation for minority- and women-owned operators.

### **Support a Chicago casino.**

A responsible, transparent and well-regulated casino can be a critical source of revenue, with a portion earmarked to address pension payments. Susana would make this a priority of her Springfield agenda and fight to have it built in a location that lures tourists rather than becoming a debt trap in Chicago's under resourced neighborhoods.

### Explore refinancing pension debt to save taxpayer dollars.

As Comptroller, Susana successfully battled Gov. Rauner to refinance state debt, saving taxpayers between \$4 and \$6 billion over the lifetime of the bond deal. As mayor, Susana will work with the City Council in a collaborative and transparent way to explore available financing tools, including the possible issuance of a pension obligation bond to refinance pension debt to secure the retirement savings of city workers while reducing the burden on taxpayers.

### Actively oppose regressive tax increases.

Susana is committed to protecting working families and will oppose any attempts to raise the sales tax rate or other taxes on essential household items. Growing up in a middle-class family, Susana knows how much harder across-the-board tax increases hit working families. The disastrous implementation of the regressive soda tax last year was proof that instead of making government more efficient, the first instinct of some politicians is to simply propose more taxes that hit lower- and middle-income

families the hardest. As mayor, Susana will always recognize the disproportionate impact that regressive taxes have, and she will oppose increases in those taxes.

### Seek a statewide solution in partnership with other municipalities.

Chicago is not alone in facing big challenges with stabilizing its pension funds. For example, roughly one-third of the state's more than 650 public safety pension funds are less than 50% funded. Susana understands the statewide implications of this crisis from her time as Comptroller, when mayors from across the state struggled to pay bills during the draconian 736-day budget crisis. Drawing on the strong relationships Susana has built as Comptroller, she will work with public officials throughout Illinois to work with Governor Pritzker for equitable and sustainable pension revenue sources.

## CHICAGO

MAGAZINE

**Susana Mendoza —The most forceful combatant in the warfare over the state's dire finances.**

## **Make fiscal discipline a priority.**

Susana has led by example when it comes to fiscal responsibility. When Susana took over the Chicago City Clerk's Office, she found skyrocketing overtime bills and worked to rein them in, cutting overtime spending by more than 70%. She also reduced payroll by 10%. As Illinois Comptroller, she saved taxpayers millions of dollars. She cut her office budget by \$2.2 million and returned \$1 million to the state after coming in under budget. She will bring that same fiscal discipline to City Hall.

## **Reform workers' compensation administration for greater transparency.**

Chicago is the only major city that places workers' compensation decisions in its legislative body. Susana supports a top-to-bottom review of the city's \$100 million workers' compensation program with the overdue goal of creating a transparent and efficient process in which decisions are subject to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and the city's Inspector General can investigate misconduct within the program.

## **Rebuild trust in our property tax system.**

In 2017, the Chicago Tribune published an investigative series on the Cook County Assessor's Office that found that the assessment system was unfairly hitting low- and middle-income homeowners to the benefit of owners of more expensive homes. New leadership in the office provides an opportunity to restore the public's trust in the property tax assessment system.

## **Reform the property tax assessment process.**

Susana will work with Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi to shine a light on the office's approach to valuing properties and allow for comment and review by ordinary Chicagoans as well as independent experts. The current system favors the wealthy and connected, and must be opened to full public scrutiny to ensure reforms are comprehensive and include public input.

**The disastrous implementation of the regressive soda tax last year was proof that instead of making government more efficient, the first instinct of some politicians is to simply propose more taxes that hit lower- and middle-income families the hardest.**



**Pass tiered property tax assessments to push the burden on those who can most afford it.**

Susana will work with Assessor Fritz Kaegi to make our property tax system more progressive by advocating in Springfield for a tiered approach to property tax assessments, similar to what is in place in a number of other states. Under this approach, properties with lower assessments are taxed at a lower rate than more expensive properties. As mayor, Susana will support making the necessary changes in state law to allow Assessor Kaegi to make these changes in Cook County.





# SUSANA ★ MENDOZA

FOR MAYOR

Coming soon: My Future Now Plan  
for Transportation, Health, Affordable  
Housing, and more.

Let me know what you think and what you'd want to  
learn more about by going to:  
[susanamendoza.com/letmeknowwhatyouthink](https://susanamendoza.com/letmeknowwhatyouthink)



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